LIFE IN THE WORD

PHILIP MAURO

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LIFE IN THE WORD

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Life in The Word

"*The Word of God which liveth.*"—1 PET. 1: 23.

By
PHILIP MAURO
Author of "The World and Its God," and "Man's Day"

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INTRODUCTION

IT must be evident to all who pay close attention to the spiritual conditions of our day that there is being made at this time a very determined and wide-spread effort to set aside entirely the *authority* of the Bible. Let us note that one of the unique characteristics of that Book is that it claims the right to control the actions of men. It speaks "as one *having* authority." It assumes, and in the most peremptory and uncompromising way, to rebuke men for misconduct, and to tell them what they shall do and what they shall not do. It speaks to men, not as from the human plane, or even from the standpoint of superior human wisdom and morality; but as from a plane far above the highest human level, and as with a wisdom which admits of no question or dispute from men. Its attitude throughout is that of demanding from man unqualified submission.

But this assumption of control over men is a direct obstacle to the democratic spirit of the times, which brooks no authority higher than that of "the people," that is to say, of Man himself.

To establish and to make universal the principles of pure democracy is the object, whether consciously or unconsciously, of the great

thought-movements of our era; and the essence and marrow of democracy is the supreme authority of Man. Hence the conflict with the Bible.

Not only is the Bible, with its peremptory assertion of supremacy and control over mankind, directly counter to the democratic movement, but it is now the *only* real obstacle to the complete independence of humanity. If only the authority of Scripture be gotten rid of, mankind will have attained the long-coveted state of absolute independence, which is equivalent to utter lawlessness.

The state of ideal democracy would be accurately described as "lawlessness," since it is manifest that an individual or a society which is under no restraint except such as is self-imposed, is really under no restraint at all. To attain this ideal state is the end and purpose of present day movements; and, in order to promote these movements, that mighty spiritual Intelligence who is designated "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2: 2) very wisely, and with consummate subtlety, directs the attack, from many different quarters, against the authority of the Bible.

The great mass of men, including the majority of the leaders of the age, are already completely absorbed in the activities of the world and utterly indifferent to the claims of the Bible. As to these, it is only necessary to take care that they

are not aroused from their indifference. But the Bible nevertheless, by reason of its hold upon the consciences of the few, exerts, upon society as a whole, a mighty restraining influence, against which the assaults of the enemies of truth are now being directed.

In some quarters the authority of the Bible is directly assailed and its Divine origin disputed in the name of "Science" and of "Scholarship." Much of the learning and theological activity of the day are concentrated upon the attempt to discredit the Bible, and to disseminate views and theories directly at variance with its claims of divine inspiration and authority.

In other quarters the attack takes the form of a pretense of conceding the inspiration of the Bible, coupled with the claim that other writers and other great literary works were equally inspired. "God is not limited," we are told, "and can speak to man, and does speak to man, in our day, in like manner as in the days of Moses, Isaiah, or Paul."

Manifestly it makes practically no difference whether the Bible be dragged down to the level of other books, or other books be exalted to the level of the Bible. The result is the same in both cases, namely, that the unique authority of the Bible is set aside.

But even in quarters where the Divine origin of the Bible is fully recognized, the enemy is

actively at work with a view to weakening its influence. There is much teaching abroad (heard usually in connection with certain spiritual manifestations which have become quite common of late) to the effect that those who have the Spirit dwelling in them, and speaking directly to and through them, are independent of the Word of God. This is the form which the idea of a continuing revelation takes in quarters where a direct attack on the authority of Scripture would fail. But the result is the same.

In such a state of things it is manifestly of the very highest importance to insist unceasingly upon the sufficiency, finality and completeness of the Revelation given by God in His Word. With the desire to serve this purpose, even though it be in a very small degree, these pages are written. It would be, however, a task far beyond the capacity of the writer to present all the unique characteristics of the Bible, whereby it is so distinguished from other books that it occupies a class by itself. The writer has, therefore, singled out for consideration one special attribute, or characteristic of the Holy Scriptures, namely that signified by the word "living." For this task the writer's previous studies and inquiries in the domain of the natural sciences have (humanly speaking) in some measure qualified him; but in entering upon it his reliance is not upon these natural qualifications (which God does not require

though He may be pleased to make use of them) but upon the Spirit of God, whom we (believers) have received in order "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2 : 12).

If one is able to apprehend, however feebly, the tremendous fact that the Word of God is a LIVING Word, such knowledge will go far towards affording him protection from what is perhaps the greatest danger of these "perilous times."

Life in The Word

I

THE INCARNATE WORD, AND THE WRITTEN WORD: BOTH ARE "LIVING"

OF the many statements which the Bible makes concerning the Word of God, none is more significant, and surely none is of greater importance to dying men, than the statement that the Word of God is a LIVING Word.

In Philippians 2: 16 we have the expression "The Word of Life." The same expression occurs in 1 John 1: 1. It is here used of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, whereas in Philippians it is apparently the Written Word that is spoken of. The Written Word and the Incarnate Word are so identified in Scripture that it is not always clear which is referred to. The same things are said of each, and the same characters attributed to each. The fundamental resemblance lies in the fact that each is the Revealer or tangible expression of the Invisible God. As the written or spoken word expresses, for the purpose of communicating to another, the invisible and inacces-

sible thought, so Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word, and the Holy Scriptures as the Written Word, express and communicate knowledge of the invisible and inaccessible God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me" (John 14: 9, 11).

In Hebrews 4: 12 we find the statement that "The Word of God is LIVING and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (R. V.). Clearly this refers to the Written Word. But the very next verse, without any change of subject, directs our attention to the Searcher of hearts (Rev. 2: 23), saying: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in *His* sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

Again in 1 Peter 1: 23 we read of "the Word of God which liveth," or more literally, "the Word of God living." Here again there might be uncertainty as to whether the Incarnate Word or the Written Word be meant; but it is generally understood that the latter is in view, and the quotation from Isaiah 40: 6–8 would confirm this idea.

From these passages we learn that the Word of God is spoken of as a "living" Word. This is a very remarkable statement, and is worthy of our closest examination, and most earnest consideration. Why is the Word of God thus

spoken of? Why is the extraordinary property of LIFE, or vitality, attributed to it? In what respects can it be said to be a living Word, or Word of life?

But the expression "living" as applied to the Word of God, manifestly means something more than partaking of the kind of life with which we are acquainted from observation. God speaks of Himself as "the Living God." The Lord Jesus is the "Prince of Life" (Acts 3: 15). He announced Himself to John in the vision of Patmos as "He that liveth." Eternal life is in Him (1 John 5: 11).

It is clear, then, that when we read: "The Word of God is living," we are to understand thereby, that it lives with a spiritual, an inexhaustible, an inextinguishable,—in a word—a *Divine* life. If the Word of God be indeed living in this sense, then we have here a fact of the most tremendous significance. In the world around us the beings and things which we call "living" may just as appropriately be spoken of as "dying." What we call "the land of the living" might better be described as the land of the dying. Wherever we look we see that death is in possession, and is working according to its invariable method of corruption and decay. Death is the real monarch of this world, and we meet at every turn the gruesome evidence and results of the universal sway of him who has "the power of

death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2 : 14). "Death reigned" (Rom. 5 : 17), and still reigns over everything. The mighty and awful power of death has made this earth of ours a great burying-ground,—a gigantic cemetery.

Can it be that there is an exception to this apparently universal rule? Is there, indeed, in this world of dying beings, where the forces of corruption fasten immediately upon everything into which life has entered, and upon all the works of so-called living creatures,—one object which is really *living*, an object upon which corruption cannot fasten itself, and which resists and defies all the power of death? Such is the assertion of the passages of Scripture which we have quoted. Surely then, if these statements be true, we have here the most astounding phenomenon in all the accessible universe; and it will be well worth while to investigate an object of which so startling an assertion is seriously, if very unobtrusively, made.

Before we proceed with our inquiry let us note one of many points of resemblance between the Incarnate Word and the Written Word. When "the Word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us" (John 1 : 14) there was nothing in His appearance to manifest His deity, or to show that "in Him was life" (John 1 : 4). That fact was demonstrated, not by His blameless and unselfish behaviour, nor by His incomparable

teachings and discourses, but by His *resurrection from the dead.* The only power which is greater than that of death is the power of life. He had, and exercised, that power, and holds now the keys of death and of hades (Rev. 1 : 18, R. V.).

Similarly, there is nothing in the appearance and behaviour (so to speak) of the Bible to show that it has a characteristic, even Divine life, which other books have not. It bears the same resemblance to other writings that Jesus, the son of Mary, bore to other men. It is given in human language just as He came in human flesh. Yet there is between it and all other books the same difference as between Him and all other men, namely, the difference *between the living and the dying.* "The Word of God is living."

It will require, therefore, something more than a hasty glance or a casual inspection to discern this wonderful difference; but the difference is there, and with diligence and attention we may discover some clear indications of it.

II

NO DEFINITIONS OF LIFE

MAN'S wisdom and learning are incapable of furnishing a definition of life. The attempts of the wisest and most learned to furnish such a definition only serve to exhibit the futility of the attempt.

Herbert Spencer, who has made the most ambitious attempt of modern times to explain the visible universe, gives this as the result of his best efforts to define life: "Life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations."

This definition manifestly stands as much in need of explanation as that which it purports to explain. But it will serve at least to remind us that the wisdom of men is foolishness with God.

Another eminent man of science defined life as "the twofold internal movement of composition and decomposition, at once general and continuous."

These modern definitions are scarcely an improvement upon that of Aristotle, who defined life as "the assemblage of the operations of nutrition, growth, and destruction."

What a marvellous thing is life, and how far it transcends the comprehension of man, since his best efforts to define it give results so ridiculously inadequate!

The ignorance of scientific men on this subject is frankly confessed by Alfred Russel Wallace, who in one of his latest books—"Man's Place in the Universe"—says: "Most people give scientific men credit for much greater knowledge than they possess in these matters." And again: "As to the deeper problems of life, and growth, and reproduction, though our physiologists have learned an infinite amount of curious and instructive facts, they can give us *no intelligible* explanation of them."

But, if none of us can say what life is, we can all distinguish between that which is living (even in the ordinary sense of the word) and that which is not living; and our best idea of the meaning of life is obtained by comparing that which has life (whether animal or vegetable) with that which has not life, as minerals, or any non-living matter. We know that, between the two, there is a great gulf, which only Divine power can span; for it is only the Living God who can impart life to that which is lifeless.

We look then at the Written Word of God to see if it manifests characteristics which are found only in living things, and to see if it exhibits, not merely the possession of life of the perishable

and corruptible sort with which we are so familiar by observation, and which is in each of us, but life of a different order—imperishable and incorruptible.

III

PERENNIAL FRESHNESS

THE Bible differs radically from all other books in its perpetual freshness. This characteristic will be recognized only by those who know the Book in that intimate way which comes from living with it, as with a member of one's family. I mention it first because it was one of the first *unique* properties of the Bible which impressed me after I began to read it as a believer in Christ. It is a very remarkable fact that the Bible never becomes exhausted, never acquires sameness, never diminishes in its power of responsiveness to the quickened soul who comes to it. The most familiar passages yield as much (if not more) refreshment at the thousandth perusal, as at the first. It is indeed as a fountain of living water. The fountain is the same, but the water is always fresh, and always refreshing. We can compare this to nothing but what we find in a living companion, whom we love and to whom we go for help and fellowship. The person is always the same, and yet without sameness. New conditions evoke new responses; and so it is with the Bible. As a living book it adapts itself to the new phases of our experience, and the new conditions in which we find ourselves.

From the most familiar passage there comes again and again a *new message;* just as our most familiar friend or companion will have something new to say, as new situations require it.

This is true of no other book. What man's book has to say we can get the first time; and the exceptions arise merely from lack of clearness on the writer's part, or lack of apprehension on the part of the reader. Man can touch only the surface of things, and he cares only about surface appearances. So, in all his writings, whatever substance they contain lies on the surface, and can be gathered by a capable reader at once. If the Word of God may be compared in this particular to a living person, the books of men may be compared to pictures or statues of living persons. However beautifully or artistically executed, a single view may readily exhaust the latter, and a second and third look will be mere repetitions. The difference is that which exists between the living and the dead. The Word of God is *living*.

But while the Bible resembles, in this important respect, a living person, who is our familiar, sympathetic, and responsive companion, it differs from such a human companion in that the counsel, comfort, and support it furnishes are far above and beyond what any human being can supply; and the only explanation of this is that the source of its life and powers is not human, but Divine.

IV

THE BIBLE DOES NOT BECOME OBSOLETE

One of the most prominent characteristics of books written by men for the purpose of imparting information and instruction is that they very quickly become obsolete, and must be cast aside, and replaced by others. This is particularly true of books on science, text-books, school-books and the like. Indeed it is a matter of boasting (though it would be hard to explain why) that "progress" is so rapid in all departments of learning as to render the scientific books of one generation almost worthless to the next. Changes in human knowledge, thought and opinion occur so swiftly, that books, which were the standards yesterday, are set aside to-day for others, which in turn will be discarded for yet other "authorities" to-morrow. In fact, every book which is written for a serious purpose begins to become obsolete before the ink is dry on the page. This may be made the occasion of boasting of the great progress of humanity, and of the wonderful advances of "science"; but the true significance of the fact is that man's books are all, like himself, dying creatures.

The Bible, on the other hand, although it treats of the greatest and most serious of all subjects, such as God, Christ, eternity, life, death, sin, righteousness, judgment, redemption,—is always the latest, best, and *only* authority on all these and other weighty matters whereof it treats. Centuries of "progress" and "advancement" have added *absolutely nothing* to the sum of knowledge on any of these subjects. The Bible is always fresh and thoroughly "up to date." Indeed it is far, far ahead of human science. Progress cannot overtake it, or get beyond it. Generation succeeds generation, but each finds the Bible waiting for it with its ever fresh and never failing stores of information touching matters of the highest concern, touching *everything* that affects the welfare of human beings.

V

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

HUMAN teachers and teachings have, indeed, frequently set themselves in opposition to some of the statements of the Bible; and it has often been announced, upon human authority, that errors in history and in matters of science had been detected in the Bible. Some, indeed, have endeavoured to save the reputation and authority of the Bible by saying that it was not written to teach men "science." In a sense this is true. The Bible was not written to impart that kind of knowledge which "puffeth up"; but just the contrary. It was written to impart that kind of information which takes man down, by showing him his true position as a ruined, perishing creature, under the condemnation and power of death, and utterly "without strength," that is to say, incapable of doing *anything* to deliver himself out of this deplorable condition. It declares that, "if any man think that he knoweth ANYTHING, he knoweth NOTHING yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8 : 2).

Such is the plain declaration of Scripture as to the limitations of all human knowledge; and he who knows the most is most conscious of these limitations. But if, by the statement that the Bible

was not written to teach "science," it be meant that the Bible is unscientific, that statement is not true. On the contrary, the Bible is the only book in the world that is truly "scientific"; for it is the only book which gives precise, accurate, and *absolutely reliable* information upon every subject whereof it treats. It is the only book in the world upon *every* statement of which one may safely put implicit confidence. Countless millions have believed the statements of the Word of God, every one of them to his unspeakable advantage, not one of them to his hurt.

We used to hear a great deal, some thirty years ago, about the many "mistakes of Moses," and the errors which "science," with her keen eye, had detected in the Scriptures. But we hear very little to-day from scientists themselves, about the "conflicts between science and religion." These conflicts have, one by one, ceased as "science" has revised her hasty conclusions and corrected her blunders. The writer has been a diligent student of the physical sciences and of the philosophies based on them, for upwards of twenty-five years, and a practicing lawyer for a still longer period, and having now acquired a fair knowledge of the text of Scripture, he can say that he is aware of no demonstrated fact of science which is in conflict with a single statement of the Bible. Among all the "assured results of science" there exists not, to his knowledge, evidence sufficient in char-

acter and amount to convict the Bible of a single error or misstatement. Of course, such evidence could not exist. The Lord Jesus said of the Word of God, "Thy Word is truth" (John 17 : 17); and of course, true knowledge of God's creation cannot conflict with His Word.

A recent book by Alfred Russel Wallace entitled "Man's Place in the Universe" (1904) furnishes a striking illustration, on a large scale, of the way in which "science" after leading the thought of cultured and highly educated minds away from the truth revealed by Scripture, sometimes leads it back again.

The reading of Scripture undoubtedly gives, and was clearly intended to give, the impression that the earth is the centre of interest in the universe, and the object of the Creator's special care; that it was fitted with elaborate pains to be the habitation of living creatures, and especially of man; and that the sun, moon and stars were created with special reference to their service to the earth. Hence, for many centuries, man believed that the earth was the centre of the universe, and (though the Bible does not say so) that the sun and stars were relatively small bodies which moved around and waited upon it.

But these ideas have been completely upset by the discoveries of modern astronomers, who ascertained, at least to their entire satisfaction, that not only is the sun enormously larger than

the earth, but that it is attended by other planets, the largest of which is twelve hundred times larger than the earth. Moreover, it has also been learned, so we are told, that our sun itself is but one of an almost infinite number of stars, many of which are immensely greater in size, and which, it may be assumed, are themselves the centres of planetary systems on a much grander scale than our little solar system.

In such a universe as modern astronomy has brought into the view of man, our little earth, once thought to be its centre of interest and importance, shrinks into utter insignificance. In proportion to the vast universe of which it is a member, its size is relatively less than that of a tiny particle of dust in proportion to the mass of the earth itself. How, therefore, can it be supposed that the Creator of so inconceivably great and complex a universe, would have a special regard for this insignificant attendant of a fourth-rate sun, and for the still more insignificant creatures who dwell upon it? The earth with all its occupants could drop out of the universe and be no more missed than a single grain of sand from the seashore or a single drop of water from the ocean.

It is inevitable that these teachings of astronomy concerning the universe should have produced impressions directly opposite to those produced by Scripture, and should have placed obstacles in

the way of believing the doctrine of redemption by the incarnation and sacrificial death of the Son of God.

But now comes Mr. Wallace, the contemporary of Charles Darwin, and probably at the present day one of the most prominent men of science, and reverses the ideas which have been so widely disseminated in the name of science. Mr. Wallace masses a great body of evidence, derived both from astronomy and physics, to support the propositions, *first*, that the solar system occupies (and always has occupied) approximately the central portion of this vast universe, getting all the advantages due to such favourable position; *second*, that the earth is certainly the only habitable planet in the solar system, and presumably the only habitable spot in the whole universe. Mr. Wallace, by a vast accumulation of facts and inferences, shows that the physical conditions necessary for the maintenance of life, depend upon a great variety of complex and delicate adjustments, such as distance from the sun, the mass of the planet, its obliquity to its orbit, the amount of water as compared with land, the surface distribution of land and water, the permanence of this distribution, the density of the earth, the volume and density of the atmosphere, the amount of carbon-dioxide therein, etc. These, and other essential conditions, are met (says Mr. Wallace) only in a planet such as

this earth, situated and constructed as it is. From Mr. Wallace's premises, if the universe is assumed to be the work of an intelligent Creator, it would follow that everything in this inconceivably vast and complex universe has been planned and arranged with special reference to making this little earth of ours a place suitable for the habitation of living beings, and especially of mankind.

We give Mr. Wallace's conclusions in his own words. He says:

"This completes my work as a connected argument, founded wholly upon the facts and principles accumulated by modern science; and it leads, if my facts are substantially correct and my reasoning sound, to one great and definite conclusion,—that man, the culmination of conscious organic life, has been developed *here only* in the whole vast material universe we see around us."

Thus we have the surprising fact that one of the foremost living exponents of the teachings of science, a man who certainly attaches no importance to the teachings of Scripture, has been at great pains to show that the earth is, after all, the centre of and most important place in the whole universe; and that, so far as any purpose can be detected in it, the universe may well be supposed to exist for the sole benefit of the earth, and for the sake of producing therein those

peculiar conditions which are necessary for the existence and maintenance of life.

We may say then that, considered merely as a book of instruction, the Bible is, as to every subject whereof it treats, not merely abreast of, but far ahead of, the learning of these and all other times, whether past or future. The impressions it makes upon believing minds are the impressions of *truth*, even though (as in the instance we have just been considering) contemporary science may give, as its settled conclusions, impressions directly to the contrary.

Unlike other books of instruction *the Bible does not become obsolete.* This is a fact of immense significance; and its only explanation is that the Bible is a *living* book, the Word of the living God. All other books partake of the infirmity of their authors, and are either dying or dead. On the other hand, "The Word of God is living."

VI

THE BIBLE IS INDESTRUCTIBLE

THE Bible manifests the possession of inherent, and imperishable life in that it survives all the attempts that have been made to destroy it.

The Bible is the only book in the world that is truly hated. The hatred it arouses is bitter, persistent, murderous. From generation to generation this hatred has been kept alive. There is doubtless a supernatural explanation for this continuous display of hostility towards the Word of God, for that Word has a supernatural enemy who has personally experienced its power (Matt. 4: 1–10).

But the natural explanation of this hatred is that the Bible differs notably from other books in that it gives no flattering picture of man and his world, but just the reverse. The Bible does not say that man is a noble being, ever aspiring towards the attainment of exalted ideals. It does not describe the career of humanity as "progress," as the brave and successful struggle of man against the evils of his environment; but quite the contrary, declares it to be a career of disobedience and departure from God, a preference

for darkness rather than for light, "because their deeds are evil."

The Bible does not represent man as having come, without any fault of his own, into adverse circumstances, and as being engaged in gradually overcoming these by the development and exercise of his inherent powers. It does not applaud his achievements, and extol his wonderful civilization. Quite the contrary. It records how God saw that the WICKEDNESS of man was great in the earth (nothing else of man is described as "great") and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6: 5). It speaks of man as "being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, guile, evil dispositions; whispers, slanderers, hateful to God, insolent, proud, vaunting, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, perfidious, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful" (Rom. 1: 29–31 Gr.). It says that "They are *all* under sin," that "There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one" (Rom. 3: 10–12). Man's condition by nature is described as "*dead* in trespasses and sins," "children of disobedience;

among whom also we *all* had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were *by nature* the children of wrath" (Eph. 2: 1–3).

The Bible has nothing to say in praise of man or of his natural endowments. On the contrary, it derides his wisdom as "foolishness with God." It declares that God has made foolish the wisdom of this age (1 Cor. 1: 20); that the natural man is incapable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2: 14); and that if any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know (1 Cor. 8: 2).

Nor does the Bible predict the ultimate triumph of "civilization." It does not say that the progress of humanity shall bring it eventually to a vastly better state of things. It does not say that human nature shall improve under the influences of education and self-culture, even with that of Christianity added. On the contrary it declares that evil men "shall wax worse and worse" (2 Tim. 3: 13).

Even of "this present evil age" (Gal. 1: 4), during which the professing church is the most conspicuous object on earth, and during which the world has the enormous benefit resulting from the light of revelation and an open Bible, it is not predicted that man and his world would undergo any improvement, or that the developments of the age would be in the direction of

better conditions on earth. On the contrary, the Bible declares that "in the last days perilous (or difficult) times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, lovers of money, vaunting, proud, evil speakers, disobedient to parents, untruthful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, inconsistent, savage, not lovers of good, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having a form of piety, but denying the power of it" (2 Tim. 3: 1–5 Gr.).

Such is the character of man, and such is to be the result, as Scripture foretells it, of all his schemes of betterment, education, development, self-culture, civilization, and character-building. And because of this the Bible is heartily detested. Men have sought nothing more earnestly than they have sought to destroy this appallingly accurate portrait of themselves and their doings. How astonishing it is that any intelligent person should suppose that man drew this picture of himself, and predicted this as the outcome of all his own efforts! No wonder the Bible is hated, and for the simple and sufficient reason that it declares the truth about man and his world. The Lord Jesus set forth clearly both the fact and its explanation when He said to His unbelieving brethren, "The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it that *the works thereof are evil*" (John 7: 7).

Again, the Bible is hated because it claims the right to exercise, and assumes to exercise, *authority over man.* It speaks as one *having* authority. It issues commands to all. It says "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." It does not simply advise or commend one course of action rather than another, as one would address an equal, but it directs men imperatively what they shall do, and what they shall not do. In this manner it addresses all ranks and conditions of men,—kings and governors, parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants, rich and poor, high and low, free and bond. In this too we have a characteristic of the Bible which distinguishes it from all other books. It is no respecter of persons. But for this cause also it is hated; for men are becoming more and more impatient of all external authority. The principles of democracy, the essence of which is the supremacy (virtually the *divinity*) of man, has thoroughly leavened all society in the progressive nations of the earth. There is a sentiment abroad, which finds frequent expression and meets always with a sympathetic reception, to the effect that Man has been shackled through the ages by narrow theological ideas whereof the Bible is the source, and that the time has arrived for him to throw off this bondage, to arise in his true might and majesty, and to do great things for himself.

It is a most impressive fact that, in all the visible universe, there is nothing that assumes authority over man, or that imposes laws upon him, *except the Bible.* Once thoroughly rid of that troublesome book, and man will be finally rid of all authority, and will have arrived at that state of lawlessness predicted in the New Testament prophecies, wherein society will be ready to accept the leadership of that "lawless one," whose coming is to be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and wonders of falsehood, and with all deceit of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not a love of the truth that they might be saved (2 Thess. 2 : 7–10).

This is perhaps the main purpose of the persistent attempts in our day, mostly in the name of scholarship and liberal theology, to break down the authority of Scripture ; and we may see with our own eyes that the measure of success of this great apostasy is just what the Bible has foretold.

Other books arouse no hatred. There may be books which men dislike, and such they simply let alone. But the Bible is, and always has been, hated to the death. It is the *one book* that has been pursued from century to century, as men pursue a mortal foe. At first its destruction has been sought by violence. All human powers, political and ecclesiastical, have combined to put it out of existence. Death has been the penalty

for possessing or reading a copy; and such copies as were found have been turned over to the public executioner to be treated as was the Incarnate Word. No expedient that human ingenuity could devise or human cruelty put into effect, has been omitted in the desperate attempt to put this detested Book out of existence. But the concentrated power of man utterly failed in the attempt. Why?

Here is one Book among countless millions which is singled out for relentless hatred, and that fact alone is sufficient to provoke astonishment and invite the closest scrutiny to ascertain the explanation of the unique phenomenon. What characteristic is it that distinguishes this Book from all other books in so strange a fashion? Has its influence upon men been corrupting or otherwise evil? Does it teach doctrines dangerous to individuals or communities? Does it promote disorder, vice or crime? On the contrary, it will not be questioned that its influence, wherever it has gone, has been beneficial beyond that of all other books combined, and that the most fruitful human lives are those which have been moulded by its teachings. One explanation alone will account for the astounding fact that such a Book should be the only one now or ever in existence to provoke active and persistent animosity among men who refuse to acknowledge it as from God, namely that it declares man to be a *fallen* crea-

ture, and his whole career to be the mere outworking of his corrupt nature in the path of disobedience; and that it predicts in plain language what the end of that path will be for all who do not accept God's way of deliverance out of it through Jesus Christ.

But, violence having failed to rid man of the Bible, other means have been resorted to in the persistent effort to accomplish that object. To this end the intellect and learning of man have been enlisted. The Book has been assailed from every side by men of the highest intelligence, culture and scholarship. Since the art of printing has been developed there has been in progress a continuous war of books. Many books against *the* Book,—man's books against God's Book. Its authority has been denied, and its veracity and even its morality have been impugned, its claims upon the consciences of men have been ridiculed; but all to no purpose, except to bring out more conspicuously the fact that the "Word of God is living," and with an indestructible life.

Should any other book incur the hatred of man (which no other book ever has, seeing that all others are man's own productions) it would not be necessary to take measures for its destruction. A book produced by dying men need only be let alone to die of its own accord. The seeds of death are in it from the start. One

Book alone has incurred man's hatred, because it is the one Book that is not his own. It is the only thing *in* the whole world that is hostile *to* the whole world-system. One Book only has man attempted to destroy; and yet, in this attempt, though in it all his powers and resources have been employed, he has most conspicuously and ignominiously failed. Why?

A little less than a century and a half ago a book made its appearance which attracted wide attention, particularly in the upper circles of intellect and culture. It was vauntingly entitled the "Age of Reason," and its author, Thomas Paine, was probably without superior in intelligence among his contemporaries. So confident was the author of this book that his reasonings proved the untrustworthiness of Scripture, and destroyed its claim upon the consciences of men as the revelation of the Living God, that he predicted that in fifty years the Bible would be practically out of print. But nearly thrice fifty years have passed since this boast was uttered. The boaster and his book have passed away; and their very names are well-nigh forgotten. But the Word of God has maintained its place, and not by human power. They who believe and cherish it are a feeble folk. Not many wise, not many mighty, not many high-born are among them. They have no might of their own to stand against the enemies of the Bible. The

situation resembles a scene recorded in 1 Kings 20: 27, where the Israelites went out against the Syrians, and we read that "The children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country."

But notwithstanding such great odds, the victory is certain. The enemies of the Bible have indeed filled the country. Yet they shall all pass away; but the Word of the Lord shall not pass away.

Again, in more recent times, a book of man was put forth, and was hailed as a work which would quickly destroy the credibility of Scripture and put an end to its authority and influence. This was Charles Darwin's "Descent of Man," a book whose influence has been greater, doubtless, than any other that has made its appearance during a century past. The main feature of this work was that it set forth an explanation of the origin of living beings, including man, radically different from that of Genesis, and propounded a theory of propagation of living species directly contrary to the great and immutable law declared nine times over in the first chapter of the Bible in the words "after his kind."

The delight which Darwin's book caused among the enemies of the Bible, and the spirit in which its appearance was welcomed, are well illustrated by the title bestowed upon it by the eminent naturalist Haeckel, who called it the

"Anti-Genesis," declaring that by a single stroke Darwin had annihilated the dogma of Creation. But it was not because of its supposed contribution to truth that Darwin's book was so widely and cordially received, and his utterly unproved hypothesis so readily accepted as an "assured result of science." Its vogue was largely due to the fact that it struck at the very foundation of Scripture. It is useless to pretend that Darwin's theory might be true, and the Bible nevertheless entitled to respect. The Lord Jesus said to a learned man of His day, "If I have told you *earthly things*, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of *heavenly things*" (John 3: 12). If the Bible does not give us a truthful account of the events of the six days recorded in its first chapter, it is not to be trusted as to *any* of its statements.

But we have now the record of about half a century since the publication of Darwin's book; and though the great movements of unbelief and apostasy are swiftly running their predicted course, there never was a time when the absolute and Divine accuracy of Scripture, from beginning to end, was more firmly grasped and tenaciously held by those who know it best, and never a time since "science" began to be looked to as an authority and instructor of men when there was less "scientific" basis for the prevalent questioning of the statements of the Bible.

There can be, of course, no real conflict between the Bible and any true discovery of science. Such conflicts as have been supposed to exist arose from hasty and incorrect conclusions, whose chief value in the eyes of many lay in the fact that they contradicted the Bible. As science has been compelled, however reluctantly, to correct her blunders, or to acknowledge that supposedly demonstrated truths were at best but unproved conjectures, the "conflicts" have died out; so that, at the present time, the assured teachings of "science" afford no weapons against the statements of the Bible. On the contrary, the investigations of men, in fields of geology, physics, and palæontology, have brought into view much information recorded ages ago in the Bible, information which, at the time the latter was written, was not in the knowledge of man. As has been already said, there is not a single assertion of the Bible that is in conflict with any demonstrated fact of science. All the investigations, of all the searchers, in all the various fields of search, have not availed to produce evidence sufficient in character and amount to convict Scripture of a single false statement.

But it is time to bring to a close our remarks under this heading though they might be greatly extended.

We have called attention to the strange fact that, of all the millions of books that have

existed, the Bible is the only one that has excited deep and persistent hatred, the only Book which men have sought to get rid of, and that by every conceivable means. We have further called attention to the still stranger fact that, in this attempt to destroy the Bible, the powers of state, of religion, and of learning have all been enlisted, and that, nevertheless, the number of copies of the Bible goes on steadily increasing. How can these facts be explained except by the statement that "the Word of God is *living*" and that the source of its life is beyond the reach of man,—in the very Being of the Living God?

VII

THE BIBLE IS A DISCERNER OF HEARTS

The power of discernment belongs only to an intelligent living being; and the power of discernment possessed by man does not go beneath the surface of things. Yet the passage in Hebrews, already quoted (4:12), asserts that the Word of God is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

This is a very remarkable statement, yet it is true, and millions of men have felt and recognized the searching and discerning power of the Word of God. We go to it not so much to learn the thoughts of other men, as to learn our own thoughts. We go to other books to find what was in the hearts and minds of their authors; but we go to this Book to find what is in our own hearts and minds. To one who reads it with ever so little spiritual intelligence, there comes a perception of the fact that this Book understands and knows all about him. It lays bare the deepest secrets of his heart, and brings to the surface of his consciousness, out of the unfathomable depths and unexplorable recesses of his own being, "thoughts and intents" whose existence was unsuspected. It reveals man to

himself in a way difficult to describe, and absolutely peculiar to itself. It is a faithful mirror which reflects us exactly as we are. It detects our motives, discerns our needs; and having truthfully discovered to us our real selves, it counsels, reproves, exhorts, guides, refreshes, strengthens, and illuminates.

It has been pointed out that the Greek word rendered "discerner" in Heb. 4: 12, means literally "critic" (kritikos), and that this is its only occurrence in Scripture. How very significant is it that the designation "higher critics" has been assumed by that little coterie of presumptuous men who claim to be able, by their own powers of literary discernment, to assign the dates of production of books and parts of books of Scripture, to detect spurious passages, alleged interpolations, and the like, and to split up books into fragments, assigning bits to one imaginary author and other bits to another; whereas it is the Bible that is the "Critic" of men.

This is in keeping with the subversive principles of this present evil age, wherein man is seeking to put himself in the place of God. This is "man's day." Man is now the critic of everything, and particularly of God's Word. Of that he is a "*higher* critic."

There is, however, no external evidence to support the higher critical views as to the late origin of the Pentateuch, Daniel, the latter part

of Isaiah, etc. *Per contra* every pertinent discovery in the ruins of ancient cities corroborates the statements of Scripture. These theories rest entirely upon the alleged intuitive perceptions of sinful men, compassed about by infirmity, who claim to be able to pass infallibly upon the style and contents of each book of the Bible, to decide when it was written, by whom it could not have been written, and even to divide it up into various portions, assigning each to a different "source."

But high scholarship is not incompatible with belief in the full inspiration and accuracy of Scripture. Dean Burgon, one of the famous scholars of Oxford, says:

"I must be content with repudiating, in the most unqualified way, the notion that a mistake of any kind whatever is consistent with the texture of a narrative, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

"The Bible is none other but the Word of God, not some part of it more and some part of it less so, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, absolute, faultless, unerring, supreme. 'The witness of God which He hath testified of His Son.'"

The time is at hand when the haughtiness of man shall be brought low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. Then the Word of God shall judge the critics.

Meanwhile the living Word shall continue to be the discerning companion of all who resort to it for the help which is not to be had elsewhere in this world of the dying. In going to the Bible we never think of ourselves as going *back* to a book of the distant past, to a thing of antiquity; but we go to it as to a book of the *present*—a living book. And so indeed it is, living in the power of an endless life, and able to build us up and to give us an inheritance among all them that are sanctified (Acts 20: 32).

VIII

THE TRANSLATABILITY OF SCRIPTURE

THE Word of God manifests itself as a living Word in the very unique property it has of adapting itself and its message to all peoples, and of speaking in all languages, tongues and dialects. The extreme mobility and adaptability of Scripture, as manifested in this way, is comparable only to the power which a living being has of making himself at home in different countries from that in which he was born.

We have here again a characteristic which distinguishes the Bible from all other books, as any one may, with a little attention, clearly perceive. It is a universal rule that a book does not thrive except in the language in which it was written. Men's books will not always bear translation; and the greater the literary value of a book the more it is likely to suffer loss in being translated from one language into another. Change of locality is, to the great majority of books, absolutely destructive.

But to this rule the Bible is a marvellous exception. It seems to run freely into the mould of every language, to adapt itself perfectly thereto,

and to speak with equal directness, clearness and authority to all peoples and tribes and nations, in their mother tongue. It does not occur to us that, in reading our common English Bible, we are reading a translation of an Oriental book; and indeed, when an example of the purest and best *English* is desired, men go with one accord to the Bible.

Considered merely as a poem, there is nothing more exquisite in the English language than the Twenty-third Psalm; and it has been stated that in other languages besides English this Shepherd Psalm is a model of poetical excellence. It never occurs to one reading it that he is reading a translation from another and very different language.

Is not this indeed a very extraordinary fact, and the more so when we consider that the Bible, though a unit, is at the same time highly composite? It comprises specimens of every kind of literature, historical, poetical, biographical, didactic, prophetic, epistolary, etc.

Moreover, it is not the production of a single human being, clothed in an uniform literary style or dress. On the contrary, its several parts were penned by men in widely varying stations in life, from herdsmen and unlearned fishermen, to kings and statesmen; and its styles are as divergent as its writers.

Nor was it the product of one era or period,

which would tend to impart some common characteristics, and to prevent wide divergencies. As much as fifteen hundred years elasped between the writing of its first and its last pages. Yet all parts and styles alike accommodate themselves to the change of language far more readily and perfectly than any human being is able to do when acquiring another tongue.

The property we are now considering is the more remarkable when we consider also the nation from which this unique volume has come. The Jews were anything but a literary people. They were not at all remarkable for culture, learning, art, or philosophy; and they were quite cut off by their peculiar customs, traditions, and religious institutions, from the progressive nations around them. There is no other Jewish literature that is worth talking about. Yet from such a people has come a volume whose sixty-six books, now that we have them all together, evidently constitute one complete structure, unitary in design, yet which was fifteen centuries in attaining its completed state. This book, after the Jewish people were disintegrated and scattered,—even as that very book had distinctly foretold,—and had become the most despised and persecuted people on earth, has entered into the place of supremacy in every nation which has attained to any degree of civilization, and has held that place without a rival for eighteen centuries during

which every *human* institution has been overturned again and again.

Why is it that the universal Book did not have its origin in the literature of Greece, or of ancient Rome, or in the Elizabethan epoch of English literature? Why is it that nations which have been famed for their culture and literary genius have produced nothing comparable to the Bible? What collection of sixty-six books from the writings of about thirty authors of any nation could be made that would present any of the characteristics we have been noticing? Yet it is certain that, if the Bible had a natural, instead of a supernatural origin, it would be far surpassed by the literary product of the literary nations of the earth.

This property of adaptability to all languages and peoples will impress us still more if we compare it in this respect with other Oriental books. The mere fact that it *is* an Oriental book makes its career among the Occidental nations still more miraculous. All attempts to domesticate other Oriental books, particularly sacred books, have been complete failures. Other Oriental books are sought by scholars only, or by others who have a special interest for inquiring into their contents.

Already the Bible, or portions of it, has been translated into upwards of four hundred languages and dialects; so that it is revealing the grace of

God in the gift of His Son, to practically every nation, kindred, tongue and tribe throughout the world, and is speaking to all peoples *in their own native tongues.*

Like a living person, the Bible has made its way into all lands, has adapted itself to all environments, entered into relations of the most intimate kind with all peoples, and has exerted upon them all its own unique influence. It makes no difference what the people are to whom it goes, how radically different all their customs and institutions from those of that very peculiar people Israel; the Bible makes itself perfectly at home, and takes its own place without delay. Can this, or anything remotely approaching it, be said of any other book? and if not, are we not compelled, if we would have an explanation of this extraordinary difference, to fall back upon the statement that the "Word of God is living"? No other explanation will account for any of the facts we have been considering. This explanation accounts for them all.

The fact we are here considering, that is to say, the career of the Bible among the peoples of the earth, is, indeed, a stupendous and continuing miracle. Why has this particular Book gone to the ends of the earth, and assumed everywhere, and maintained against all opposition, the place of supremacy? What has given to this collection of writings, coming from an in-

significant, peculiar, narrow-minded and isolated people, its *universal* character? Why is it that all other books, or collections of books, including the productions of the mightiest intellects and embodying the most superb and lofty specimens of human thought, wisdom, learning and experience, have been narrowly circumscribed in their area of influence, both as to time and space? Why has this particular Book continued ever widening its sphere of influence as the centuries pass, while every other book, after its first vogue, steadily contracts and dwindles? Why does this Book increase while all others decrease?

There is no *natural* explanation for these remarkable facts. In this day, when a natural explanation is sought for all things, the wise men can advance no theory to account for these facts. We sometimes hear, from the enemies of the truth, the admission that the Bible is inspired, but coupled with the statement that other books are equally inspired. For example, a prominent preacher in New York city recently said in an article published in a popular magazine, "God spake to Abraham, and to Samuel and to Isaiah. He has spoken to Henry Ward Beecher, to Tennyson, and to Ruskin." But neither this prominent preacher, nor any other man who is trying in like manner to put the Word of God on the same level as other books, is able to tell

us why the writings of these other "inspired" men do not afford some indications of their Divine origin similar to those characteristics of the Bible to which we are now calling attention.

The Apostle Paul, in the last of his writings (2 Tim. 2: 8, 9), said "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel; wherein I suffer as an evil-doer even unto bonds; but THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BOUND."

In these words we have the sufficient and the only explanation of the extraordinary and unique career of the Bible. The human custodian of the Word of God may be bound, and may be treated as a malefactor for merely being the bearer of the message; but the living Word of the living God is not, and cannot be, bound. Jehovah Himself has said, "So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth. It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55: 11).

But there is more to be noted under this heading. The Bible is the universal Book also in that it not only speaks to all peoples in their own mother tongue, but it addresses itself to all classes of society. Missionaries from every part of the world have reported how the most depraved, ignorant and vicious people will listen at once to the words of Scripture as to no other

book, and will recognize them as "good words." Like God Himself His Word is no respecter of persons. Indeed its sternest denunciations are addressed to persons of rank and of social, ecclesiastical, or political prominence. Its best promises are for the meek and lowly. It has a message for all men, and to the highest as well as the lowest it speaks "with authority," never exhorting from the standpoint merely of superior human wisdom and intelligence, but always as delivering the message of God.

The Bible adapts itself thus to successive generations of men, exhibiting to each individual human being an intimate knowledge of his characteristics, trials and needs. It seems to be waiting for an opportunity to become acquainted with each child of Adam, to direct the steps of his life-journey through this great and terrible wilderness, to warn him of dangers and pitfalls, and to be the man of his counsel to every one who wills not to reject its offer of fellowship. Does not this warrant us in saying that "the Word of God is LIVING"?

IX

THE WORD EXHIBITS THE CHARACTERISTIC OF GROWTH

GROWTH is one of the characteristics of a living being. The Word of God lodges and grows in human hearts, for there is its real lodgment, rather than in the printed page. The Psalmist says, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart" (Ps. 119: 11).

The book of Deuteronomy has much to say about the Word of God. In chapter thirty it declares (verse 14) that "The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart." This is repeated in Romans 10: 8 with the addition "that is, the word of faith which we preach."

In 1 Thessalonians 2: 13 Paul says to the Thessalonians, "When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which *effectually worketh also in you* that believe." The believing heart is its lodgment, and there it works to effect some definite results.

In Colossians 3: 16 we have the admonition "Let the word of Christ dwell *in you* richly in all wisdom." It is in the believing heart that the Word dwells richly.

The Lord Jesus, in explaining the parable of the sower said, "The seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8: 11); and again, "The sower soweth *the Word*" (Mark 4: 14). (A seed, of course, is worthless except it have life in it.) And He further explained that the seed which fell on good ground "are they which, *in an honest and good heart*, having heard the Word keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8: 15). To the unbelieving Jews the Lord said: "And ye have not His Word *abiding in you;* for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not" (John 5: 38).

In Colossians 1: 5, 6, Paul speaks of the "Word of the truth of the Gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the world and bringeth forth fruit."

In these passages we have presented to us the thought of the Word as a living seed or germ, first finding lodgment in the heart of man, and then abiding and growing there.

The growth of the Word of God is specifically mentioned in several striking passages in the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts 6: 7, "*And the Word of God increased;* and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly."

Here we are told specifically that the Word of God increased. We learn from this that the

mere multiplication of copies of the Scriptures is in itself of no importance. It is of no avail to have the Book in the house, and on the shelf or table, if it be not taken into the heart. But when so received into the heart, the Word of God grows and increases. It is assimilated into the life of him who receives it, and henceforth is a part of himself.

It is important to note what stimulated this recorded increase of the Word of God. The apostles, who were its custodians or depositories, had found themselves taken up with ministering to the material wants of the flock, and they brought this matter before the body of disciples saying: "It is not reason that we should leave the *Word of God* and serve tables," and they asked that suitable men be appointed for that service while they should give themselves continually "to prayer and the ministry of the Word."

The growth of the Word then, accompanied by a great multiplication of the number of disciples, was the result of faithful ministry of the Word sustained by prayer.

This method of promoting the growth of the Word of God is highly important. Every believer, having the Word in his heart and in his mouth, may be and should be the means of its propagation; and the extent to which the Word has been spread abroad in this inconspicuous way will not be known until the time when all

things shall be manifested. There are great multitudes who would never get the Word from the printed page, or from the spoken sermon or address. Hence the importance of these epistles of Christ written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tablets of stone, but in the fleshy tablets of the heart (2 Cor. 3 : 3). Such epistles are read by many who never read the printed page; and the eternal destiny of many souls may depend upon the distinctness and legibility of that writing. May our lives, as believers, be so transparent that the Word written in our hearts may be distinctly seen; and thus, as sons of God, we shall shine "as lights in the world holding forth the Word of life" (Phil. 2 : 15, 16).

The second passage which speaks expressly of the growth of the Word of God is Acts 12 : 21–24. In this chapter are narrated the last episodes in the life of Herod Antipas. In the first part of the chapter we read how he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword, and finding this course to be popular with the Jews, he apprehended Peter also, and put him in custody, intending after the passover to make this leader of the apostles the object of a public demonstration, which doubtless would have strengthened Herod still further in the regard of the people. But Peter was delivered from prison by an

angel of the Lord who was sent for that purpose.

The closing verses of the chapter tell of a disagreement between Herod and the citizens of Tyre and Sidon, some undescribed incident having occurred which caused the former to be highly displeased with the latter. But they, having gained the favour of King Herod's chamberlain, one Blastus, made overtures of peace and sent a delegation to the King. The reception of this embassy was made an occasion of much pomp and circumstance. Herod put on his royal apparel, sat upon his throne, received the delegation, "and made an oration unto them." This oration was received with extravagant demonstrations. "The people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man."

Herod accepted this tribute, and no doubt was highly pleased therewith. But it is a dangerous thing for mortal and sinful man, however high his station, to accept glory which belongs to God alone. For "*immediately* the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and *he* was *eaten of worms* and gave up the ghost. BUT THE WORD OF GOD GREW AND MULTIPLIED."

There is a tremendous lesson here for the many who, in these closing days of the age, are participating in the various movements which, how-

ever diverse in appearance, have all the common object of putting man in the place of God, and the word of man in the place of the Word of God. Herod was not stricken down for persecuting the Church, for imprisoning Peter, or for putting James to death, nor yet for his previous murder of John the Baptist. He was smitten for permitting his word to be acclaimed as the Word of God. Herod had often heard the Word of the Lord, for he had listened attentively to the preaching of the Baptist. He had heard of the ministry and miracles of the Lord Jesus, and had even seen Him on that dark betrayal night. He was, therefore, not smitten for something done in ignorance.

The angel of Jehovah had two ministries in that chapter. One was to deliver Peter who, according to the word of his Lord, was to serve Him to old age (John 21 : 18). The other was to declare, by smiting the King, the difference between the Word of God and that of the most important man of the country.

Doubtless that was a great oration which Herod delivered on that day. It contained most probably striking utterances, pregnant with wisdom and garbed in the attractions of human eloquence. It was, moreover, the King on his throne who spoke, and we know how the throngs gather to listen on such occasions.

On the other hand, and in striking contrast,

the Word of God was in the charge of "unlearned and ignorant men," a despised and persecuted company, whose Leader had but just suffered the ignominious death of a malefactor. What then has become of the words of King Herod? All have utterly perished, centuries ago, from the memory of men. He himself was eaten of worms; "But the Word of God grew and multiplied," and has continued so to do from that time to the present.

A short time ago, at the convening of the American Congress, a message from the President was addressed to that body. Much comment was made on that message because of its great length. Some industrious person counted the words, and found them to be upwards of thirty thousand. They were serious words, too, and weighty, as human utterances go. They dealt with the most important affairs and interests of the nation that regards itself as the greatest on earth. But they were not "the words of eternal life." And for all that the occasion was so recent, and the subject matter so important, it is doubtful if any person can now recall a single sentence of that great message. Few, indeed, would care to do so, or would receive the slightest benefit therefrom, if they could.

The words of kings, and emperors, and presidents are dying words. From the moment of their utterance they begin to perish; but "the

Word of God is living." Being the utterance of the Living God that Word can never pass away.

The last of the three passages which speaks of the growth of the Word of God is in Acts 19; and again the context adds greatly to the impressiveness of the lesson taught by the passage.

The scene of the first of the three incidents was in Jerusalem, of the second in Cæsarea, just west of Galilee, and of the third in Ephesus, a Gentile city. Thus there is special mention made of the growth of the Word of God in Judea, in Palestine outside of Judea, and in the Gentile regions beyond. This would seem to signify that the Word of God was to spread and grow in every part of the earth.

The Apostle Paul had spent two years in Ephesus, preaching to such purpose that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." And God, moreover, "wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul" (Acts 19: 10, 11).

One result of this ministry was that "many of them which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. SO MIGHTILY GREW THE WORD OF GOD AND PREVAILED" (verses 19, 20).

This is, indeed, a very notable event,—a grand

demonstration of the power and sufficiency of the Word of God. These books, intrinsically worth so great a sum as fifty thousand pieces of silver, became worse than worthless in the hands of their owners after the latter had received the Word of God. The books thus destroyed had been held in the highest estimation, because they were the manuals of necromancy, or occult arts. They instructed their readers in just such things as are coming into great favour in the present day. But when their owners "believed," they could no longer practice the "curious arts," or even retain the books that described them.

It is very easy to destroy the books of men. Great and mighty as are the powers of darkness which were back of the books burned at Ephesus, those evil powers are not comparable to that which has directed the career of the Word of God. Many have been the attempts to consume it in the flames, but in vain; for the Word of God is living.

This scene at Ephesus has been reënacted in many a human life. When in quest of help, enlightenment, wisdom, guidance, and knowledge of the unseen, men turn to books; and though disappointed again and again, the inquiring mind, which has felt the need of a source of light external to itself, and has realized that there must be such a source somewhere, never shakes off the habit of seeking it in books. There appears

to be a deep-seated consciousness that the desired help is to be found in some book. But men cannot impart to the books written by them what is not in themselves; and so they who gather many books gain little to compensate for their cost and labour. Conjectures and human opinions, philosophies and vain deceits, with all the obscurities and contradictions contained in them, do but leave the mind in perplexity and bewilderment concerning every matter of real importance. And after all, if one cannot have certainties, but must put up with mere opinions, why should he not prefer his own to another man's, seeing that all are at the best but mere guesses, whereof one is as likely to be true as another? The "wise men" can tell us nothing, for "lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" (Jer. 8:9).

But when, to one who has undergone this weariness of a vain quest for something sure and satisfying in the books of men, the Word of God comes with the convincing power which it alone possesses, and with the restful assurance which it alone can impart, the books of men become worthless,—mere rubbish, fit only to be food for flames. Conjectures are now exchanged for certainties, and profitless speculations for knowledge certified by the sure testimony of Him who knoweth and understandeth all things.

The writer lately heard a servant of Christ re-

late an incident in his own life which aptly illustrates what we have been saying. Speaking on the injunction of Ephesians 6 : 10, " Be strong in the Lord," he said : " I well remember a section in my bookcase long ago which contained a highly prized set of Emerson's works. One essay in particular I read and reread, and had marked favourite passages in it. The burden of it was, 'Young man, be strong.' This phrase occurred again and again, and it thrilled and excited me. But it pointed me to no source of strength, for the writer knew of none. He never once said 'Be strong in the Lord'; and the time came when, realizing the cruel mockery of the words, and the emptiness of this entire system of philosophy, I put the set of well-printed and choicely bound volumes into the flames." He discovered in the Bible the Source of all strength, and the Book displaced the entire set of man's philosophies and empty deceits. " So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."

Happy is the man who has "received the Word of God" (Acts 8 : 14; 11 : 1, etc.), who has made room for it in his life, and in whose heart and mind it has mightily grown and prevailed.

X

A LIFE-GIVING WORD

We come now to something higher and deeper. The great mystery of a living thing is the power it possesses of propagating its kind. To trace the stream of life to its source is confessedly impossible to man, nor does any philosophic theory account for that stream. The attempt made in recent years to explain life as a mere property of atoms of non-living matter grouped in certain complex combinations, has been confessedly a failure. Professor Huxley, probably the ablest defender of this theory, and who at one time predicted that "protoplasm" (as he named the physical basis of life) might one day be produced in the laboratory, was constrained to admit, before his death, that there was no known link between the living and the not-living.

In the era of great scientific activity which marked the last half of the nineteenth century, many and persistent efforts were made to bring about spontaneous generation; that is to say, to demonstrate that life could be caused by human manipulation to spring up out of non-living matter, and apart from antecedent life.

Great was the desire of unbelieving men of science to find a support for this theory, for if established it would flatly contradict the first chapter of the Bible, and thus discredit the statements of the latter upon a subject of the highest importance. In that chapter the first law of biology is enunciated in the words "after his kind"; and this law is applied both to the vegetable kingdom and to the animal,—to grass, and herb, and fruit tree, to fowl and fishes, and creeping things, to wild beast and tame beast. Each was commanded to bring forth "after his kind"; and it is needless to say that each has strictly obeyed that Divine command.

The inspired account of Creation does not describe the method whereby God brought into existence the several species of living creatures, and gave to each the distinct characteristics which were to be its perpetual and unvarying endowment. This matter, therefore, belongs to the realm of speculation, into which it is unprofitable to enter. What concerns us is the fact, distinctly stated, and manifestly deemed by the Spirit of God to be of great importance for our instruction in the truth, that God, in creating the numerous species of living creatures, vegetable and animal, put a permanent difference between them, rigidly confining each species to the reproduction of its own kind.

So important was this law in the mind of the

Creator, and so careful was He to impress it upon the mind of man, that the formula is stated nine times in the first chapter of Genesis. There is an emphasis in this which has great significance in view of the theory of organic evolution, which, but a few years ago, was advanced as a "scientific" explanation of the origin of species of living beings, and was accepted as such by nearly all the wise and learned of this world. That theory, however, stands before men without a scintilla of proof to support it.

I speak here not of "evolution" as that word is appropriately used to designate the progressive changes constantly taking place in *human* affairs. On the contrary, I concede fully that *all* human progress is characterized by evolutionary changes, and I know of no human institution that has not been subject to such changes. This indeed is precisely what we should expect to characterize all the works and operations of human beings; since it is the natural consequence of the act of man (Adam) in departing from God's purpose for him and entering upon a career prompted by Satan. The career of humanity, or "the course of this world" (Eph. 2: 2), has always been (so far as we have any record of it) "evolutionary" in the method and character of its progress. Whatever man does, or makes, or sets up, the forces of decay begin immediately to destroy and pull down, and this leads man to attempt one experiment

after another in the vain effort to establish something that shall endure and accomplish the object desired of it.

But the intelligent and learned who are wise in the wisdom of this world, which is " foolishness with God," have been led by the " spirit of error " into an error of the first magnitude in supposing that " evolution "—the method of procedure of fallen man—is the method of creation employed by the Divine Creator. Against this grave error I would most earnestly warn the reader, and to that end repeat that, after many years' investigation of the philosophy of evolution, an investigation carried on in full sympathy with the widest application of that captivating theory, I have yet to see proof of a *single fact* showing, or tending to show, the operation of the so-called " law " or " principle " of evolution outside of human affairs. The writer has dealt quite fully with this important distinction between evolution in human affairs, and the acts of Divine Creation (as in the origin of the species) in *The World and its God*, chapters xvi. *et seq.* It is sufficient here to say that no instance has ever been found of a living thing of one species coming from ancestors of another species; and there is not the slightest ground for the belief that such a thing ever happened. On the other hand, every one of the countless billions of reproductions of living creatures—the grass, the herb yielding seed, and

the fruit-tree yielding fruit—which occur every year, are in accordance with the Divine command recorded in the first chapter of Genesis. Oak trees have never betrayed the slightest tendency to produce any fruit but acorns, nor acorns to produce any trees but oaks. The theory of organic evolution, promulgated by Darwin and Wallace, has nothing to commend it except that it offers an alternative to the acceptance of the account of the origin of species given in the Bible.

The attempts made by the empiricists of the last century to bring about, or to demonstrate the possibility of, spontaneous generation of living organisms by human manipulation apart from preëxisting organisms of the same species, were at first thought to have been successful. Infusions of hay were prepared which, after being tightly sealed in suitable flasks, were heated to a temperature sufficiently high (as was supposed) to destroy all life within the flasks. These were then set aside for a while, and kept under observation; and in the course of time they were found to contain minute living organisms. These "results of science" were heralded far and wide, and great was the rejoicing occasioned thereby.

But other men of science, among whom the most prominent was Liebig, went over the ground again, repeating the experiments more carefully; and their results showed that, in the earlier ex-

periments, either the flasks had not been tightly sealed, or else the heat to which they were exposed had not been sufficiently great to destroy all the living organisms therein. So conclusive were these later experiments that the theory of spontaneous generation (or "abiogenesis") has had no standing whatever from that time to the present.

The following quotations will accurately inform the reader as to the best scientific opinion on this subject.

Lord Kelvin who, until his recent death, held the leading place among scientific men, used this positive language:

"Inanimate matter cannot become living except under the influence of matter already living. This is a fact in science which seems to me as well ascertained as the law of gravitation."

Again he said:

"I am ready to accept as an article of faith in science, valid for all time and in all space, that *life is produced by life and only by life.*"

Professor Huxley, the advocate of the theory of "animal automatism," who at one time contended earnestly that vitality was merely a property of "protoplasm," (that is to say, the property of a particular chemical compound of carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen) left this record before his death:

"The present state of knowledges furnishes us

with no link between the living and the not-living."

Professor Tyndall says:

"Every attempt made in our day to generate life independent of antecedent life has utterly broken down."

Such has, indeed, been, and such must ever be, the result of all human attempts to start the flow of a stream of life, or to divert one which God has started, so as to change the form of manifestation which the Author and Giver of life has given to each species of living creatures.

We wish the reader to understand that we rest nothing whatever upon the outcome of the foregoing scientific controversy, nor upon the above quoted (or any other) statements of human opinion however high their source. Faith has no foundation other than the Word of God.

Men of science may be right or wrong in their deductions from the fragmentary information possessed by them. Generally they are wrong, as is clearly enough shown by the fact that a large part of the work of each generation of men of science consists in overturning or modifying the theories of their predecessors. The foregoing is given as an illustration of the utter futility of setting up the deductions of the human reason against the assertions of the Word

of God, and as a caution to the reader, if he be a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ, not to give the slightest credence to any statements made in the name of "science" or "scholarship" which call into question what is written in the inspired Scriptures.

We may ask then, Is the Word of God a living Word in this particular sense? Does it have the mysterious power of imparting life; and if so, is the life it imparts of the same sort as its own? Does it reproduce "after its kind"?

This brings up the great subject of spiritual conception and generation, concerning which the Scripture gives not a little information. Into this highly interesting but difficult subject we will not now enter. Even the beginning and maintenance of physical life in plants and animals (including man) are great and inscrutable mysteries. This is true in all stages of the process, particularly in the initial stage of germination, which is the beginning of a new individual existence by the quickening of a seed derived from a previously existing individual of the same species. How much more mysterious, then, must be the process of spiritual generation! The Lord Jesus, in His conversation with the learned and intellectual Pharisee, Nicodemus, indicated that the subject was a very mysterious one, by the words, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but

canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: *so* is every one that is born (or begotten) of the Spirit."

Therefore, even after we have learned all that is given us to know concerning the beginning of physical life in the naturally begotten, and of spiritual life in the supernaturally begotten, the subject remains as mysterious as ever, since the Author of life has reserved it among the "secret things" which "belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. 29: 29).

But the *fact* of natural generation cannot be questioned, though the *process* be involved in unfathomable mystery. The fact of spiritual generation is equally sure to all who believe the Word of God. The Bible plainly declares it, and those who believe on the Christ of God know also by experience the beginning of a new kind of life in their own souls.

For present purposes it is sufficient to point out that spiritual generation is analogous (as might be expected) to natural generation, being effected by means of a seed, which, having been deposited in a prepared place, is quickened by the Spirit of God, and becomes itself "spirit,"—that is to say a new nature which is spiritual in its character; for "that which is born (or begotten) of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3: 6).

The fact of spiritual conception, and the nature of the seed whereby it is effected, are plainly de-

clared in 1 Peter 1 : 23 : "Being born (or having been begotten) again, not of corruptible *seed*, but of incorruptible, *by the Word of God which* LIVETH and abideth forever."

There is an immense amount of truth of the highest importance contained in this passage ; but the statement which especially concerns us is that the seed of the new birth is from the living Word ("the Word which LIVETH"). This statement plainly teaches that the Word of God possesses the highest endowment of a living being, namely, that of imparting life. And with this agrees the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the parable of the sower, in the explanation of which He said, "The SEED is the Word of God" (Luke 8 : 11).

In consequence of the transgression and fall of the first man, who was the original depository of the life of humanity (Gen. 2 : 7), the life in him, being "corruptible," became vitiated. Hence, by inexorable law, the seed of his generations also became corrupted. It follows that all men in their natural generation are begotten of corruptible (and corrupted) seed ; and have received (and hence must impart to their succeeding generations) a corrupted life. What, therefore, was needed, in order to bring into existence a human family answering to God's purpose in the creation of man (Gen. 1 : 26), was a new and *incorruptible seed.* This has been supplied in

the Word of God. All who believe that Word are begotten again (or from above); not this time of corruptible seed, "but of incorruptible, by the Word of God WHICH LIVETH." It is a living Word.

It is to be noted that this Scripture testifies that the seed of the living Word is not merely uncorrupted, but is "incorruptible." It partakes, therefore, of the nature of the "uncorruptible God" (Rom. 1 : 23).

This is the guaranty to us that the Word of God is not subject to the corrupting influences of the corrupted and decaying world into which it is come. It is the *only thing* which has not succumbed to the forces of decay and death which reign universally in the earth. Indeed it has not been affected in the slightest degree by those forces. This has been pointed out at length in the foregoing pages; but the grand truth comes to us with peculiar force in connection with the passage in 1 Peter. We need not be at all concerned as to whether the truth of God, embodied by Him in His Word, has been corrupted, for it is incorruptible. And by that Word they who believe are begotten again through the operation of the Holy Spirit. To them "the Spirit is life" (Rom. 8 : 10).

The same truth is declared in James 1 : 18, in the words "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth."

Such is the spiritual conception of the "sons

of God." These are born, or begotten. In no other way is a "son" brought into existence save by being begotten of a father. The sons of God must be begotten of God. The Apostle John tells us that they are begotten, "not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man" (John 1 : 13). The Apostle James tells us that "of His own will" they are begotten. Therefore, though the process be inscrutably mysterious, there can be no doubt as to the fact. When the Word of God is truly "heard" and thereby received into a prepared heart, that word becomes truly a seed, spiritual and incorruptible in nature, which, when quickened by the Spirit of God, becomes the life-germ of a new creature, —a son of God.

The same truth is very clearly taught in our Lord's explanation of His parable of the sower, to which reference has already been made. Inasmuch as we have His own interpretation of this parable, we need be in no uncertainty as to its meaning. He says, "Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil and taketh away *the Word out of their hearts*, lest they should *believe* and be saved" (Luke 8 : 12). And again: "But that on the good ground are they which, in *an honest and good heart*, having heard the Word keep it and bring forth fruit with patience."

The method of spiritual conception set forth in

these Scriptures, which is effected in a manner quite analogous to natural conception, furnishes the explanation of the connection between "believing" and "life" referred to in many passages of Scripture. One of the most familiar of these is John 5 : 24 where the Lord Jesus states in the simplest language that the man who hears His Word and believes on Him who sent Him has everlasting life, and is passed out of death into life. Such a man receives the seed in his heart, and the seed is there quickened into life.

Indeed, the great purpose of the Written Word is to impart life,—even eternal (that is to say Divine) life,—to those who are dead through trespasses and sins. The Gospel of John, which is devoted largely to the great subject of eternal life, and from which a large part of our information concerning it is derived, was "written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that *believing* ye might have *life* through His name" (John 20 : 31).

The same truth is declared in the familiar passage in Romans 10 : 9, which sets forth very definitely the special truth which constitutes the substance and marrow of God's revelation in His Word, and which He calls upon men to believe and obey through the preaching of the Gospel, namely that Jesus Christ, who died for sinners, has been *raised from the dead*, and that He is Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father.

The main point to be apprehended in this connection is that a certain state of preparedness of heart is necessary in order that the "good seed" of the Word may germinate and grow there. Such a prepared heart is described in Scripture as a *believing* heart. That prepared state is manifested when a man *believes God*, as Abraham did (Rom. 4: 17); or, in other words, when a man is ready to receive the Word of God *as* the Word of God, as the Thessalonians did (1 Thess. 2: 13).

When a man has been brought, by the operation of the Spirit of God, who is the "Spirit of LIFE in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 2, 10), into this state of preparation, then the Word of God, being received into the heart, acts as a seed falling into good soil. Though it be (as we might say) but the tiniest portion of God's truth as revealed in His Word which is thus received by faith, yet it suffices through His power as the means whereby He may quicken a dead soul. For surely the life of the Word is in every part thereof.

Such is the power of the *living* truth to impart life; and herein lies the difference between the truth which God has revealed in His Word, and truth which may be found elsewhere. For there is much truth which is not *living* truth. The multiplication table is truth; but it is not living truth. It has no quickening power. The theorems of geometry are truth; but they are not

living truth. Never yet has any man been heard to testify that he had been the wretched and hopeless slave of sin, and had continued in spiritual darkness, fast bound in misery and vice until his eyes were opened by the great truth that two and two make four, or that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles ; and that thereby his life had been transformed, his soul delivered from bondage, and his heart filled with joy and peace in believing. On the other hand, in the case of a true conversion, it may have been but the shortest and simplest statement of " the Word of the truth of the Gospel " (Col. 1 : 5) that was heard and believed, such as that " Christ died for the ungodly " (Rom. 5 : 6), yet it suffices, through the mighty power of Him Who raised up Christ from among the dead, to quicken together with Christ a soul that previously was dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 1 : 20 ; 2 : 5). Thus the Word of truth becomes, in some inscrutable way, the vehicle for imparting that life of which the risen Christ, the Incarnate Word, is the only Source. Eternal life for the individual soul begins through believing " the testimony of God " (1 Cor. 1 : 2), and the testimony of God which He has in grace given to perishing sinners that they may believe and be saved, is " CONCERNING HIS SON " (Rom. 1 : 3 ; 1 John 5 : 10). " And this is the record (or testimony) that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son "

(1 John 5 : 11). Therefore it is written of those who are begotten again, " For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus " (Gal. 3 : 26).

The teaching and preaching of the day are largely permeated by a notion to the effect that " science " is in some undefined way supplying to a greater or less extent new foundations for religious faith. We cannot, therefore, insist too strongly upon the *vital* difference (—for it *is* vital —being a difference upon which life depends) between truth revealed by God through His Word, and truth discovered by the investigations of man, and generally spoken of as " scientific " truth. Truth thus obtained has *no relation whatsoever* to faith and eternal life ; and the effort to substitute it for, or to oppose it to, the truth revealed in God's Word as the basis of faith, must be ascribed to the activity of the " spirit of error."

Many unspiritual teachers in these last days, and many superficial readers of Scripture, deem it incredible that salvation, which is the beginning of the life of the risen Christ in the soul of a perishing man, should be wrought through an operation so apparently simple as that of receiving God's Word, through faith, into the heart.

The clear declarations of God's Word on this subject are indeed frequently ridiculed in pulpit utterances. But to such minds the germination of a

seed by merely casting it into the ground would be equally incredible. These spiritually-blinded ones, wise in their own conceits, miss altogether the teaching of the Bible concerning the wonderful process of spiritual conception and generation, which, in view of the equally myterious process of natural conception, should not be deemed "a thing incredible." "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. 1 : 20).

The passage in 1 Peter 1 sets forth, moreover, the fact that spiritual generation through the Word of God conforms to the great biological law stated with such emphatic iteration in the first chapter of Genesis, namely, that the life imparted is the same in kind as that of its source, all the characteristics of the latter being reproduced in it. Emphasis is laid on the fact that the seed is incorruptible, and that the Word, which is its source, is eternal. Moreover, as in John's gospel, the new, incorruptible, and eternal life, which proceeds from spiritual conception by the Word of God, is put into direct contrast with the natural life or "flesh." "For," continues the Apostle Peter, "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of *man* as the flower of grass." The prominent characteristic of grass is that it withereth, and of the flower of grass, or of plant life, is that it falleth away. "The grass withereth,

and the flower thereof falleth away: but"—in direct contrast with this—" the Word of the Lord endureth forever." So it does, and so do all they who are begotten of the incorruptible seed of the Word.

The passage closes with the unmistakably plain statement, " And this is the Word which, by the Gospel, is preached unto you."

The result of spiritual generation is, of course, a spiritual infant—a babe. Consequently the next words of the inspired Apostle are in full keeping with, and in confirmation of, the truth we have been considering. " Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings" (which are characteristics of the " old man") " as *new-born babes*, desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2: 1, 2). We all know that it is of the first importance that a babe should have appropriate nourishment in order that it may grow; but this belongs to the subject of spiritual nutrition, which will be considered later on.

Other Scriptures testify with equal clearness to the great and glorious truth that those who are begotten of the Spirit, through the incorruptible seed of the Word, receive a nature of the same sort as that of the Divine Source of their life. In the eighth chapter of Romans there is a section devoted to the " sons of God," in whom

the Spirit dwells (verses 9–16); and of these it is declared that God predestinated them "to be conformed *to the image of His Son*, that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (verse 30).

Here the truth of likeness with the Son of God is broadly stated. Other passages declare specific features included in this general likeness. Thus 1 John 3 : 9 states that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit (or practice) sin; for His (God's) seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born (begotten) of God. In this the children of God are manifest." The new nature which characterizes the new creature is one that cannot sin; and hence, when this new nature begins to manifest itself in the quickened soul, there is a struggle between its desires and those of the old nature ("the flesh"); for the flesh has desires against the spirit, and the spirit has desires against the flesh, and these are directly opposed, the one to the other (Gal. 5 : 17). Every one who has been begotten from above knows what this struggle means.

Again, in 1 John 3 : 2, 3, it is stated that now, even at the present time, are we (believers) the sons of God, though we appear so little like it. What we shall be does not yet appear; but we know, upon the clear testimony of Scripture, that "when He shall appear we shall be LIKE HIM; for we shall see Him as He is."

These statements are so clear that it is not necessary to cite to those who believe the Word of God other passages which declare that spiritual procreation is according to the law repeated nine times in Genesis 1, "after his kind."

In closing this important section of our subject (which might be greatly amplified if our purpose were to treat exhaustively the great truth of spiritual generation) it will be profitable to notice briefly the close relation between the Written Word and the Incarnate Word in the matter of the impartation of spiritual life.

This truth brings before us the Son of God in His wonderful and unique character of the Source of Life to a world and to human beings, which had fallen under the power and dominion of death.

"Through one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death passed upon (*lit.* passed through to) all men" (Rom. 5: 12). Thus death entered and established its universal sovereignty over all men. Such expressions as "death reigned," "sin reigned unto death" (Rom. 5: 14, 17, 21), state a fact whereof the evidences meet our eye whichever way we look.

Therefore, after Adam's transgression and the ruin wrought by it, the most urgent need of the

world was LIFE. To this end the Son of God became a partaker of flesh and blood, "that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2: 14). "I am come," He said, "that they might have *life*" (John 10: 10).

In the Gospel by John, the first thing asserted of Him, after setting forth His eternal Deity, and His mighty work as Creator, is the significant statement "In Him was LIFE" (John 1: 4). This is He who "cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world" (John 6: 33).

We need not cite the many passages of Scripture which witness to Christ as the new Source of life to a world that had fallen under the power of death; but would call attention only to a few of those which connect Him directly with the wonderful process of spiritual generation.

The very first of all prophecies, that concerning the woman's "seed" (Gen. 3: 15) is thus fulfilled in Him; and the designation "seed," thus at the very beginning applied to Him as coming in flesh and blood, carries with it the great promise of a new humanity which was to spring up from and out of Himself.

Again, as the "seed" of Abraham, He is the inheritor (for Himself and for His generations) of all the promises made "to Abraham and his seed." That we might not miss the meaning of this truth, so precious to those who, through

faith, "are the children of Abraham" (Gal. 3 : 6), it is expressly stated as follows: "Now to Abraham *and his seed* were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of ONE, And to thy SEED, which is Christ" (Gal. 3 : 16).

Finally, as David's seed He is the rightful Heir to the kingdom, which He will establish on the earth in the coming age. In promise of this there are many passages such as these: "I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom" (1 Chron. 17 : 11). "Upon David, and upon his seed and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace forever from the LORD" (1 Kings 2 : 33). "I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant, thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations" (Ps. 89 : 3, 4). "His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me" (Ps. 89 : 36).

Thus Christ is set forth as the Seed of the woman, as the Seed of Abraham, and as the Seed of David.

But the great purpose of a seed, and its marvellous inherent power, is to reproduce its kind; and the designation "seed" as applied to the Son of Man has this significance also. He Himself takes up this great lesson when He refers to Himself as the kernel of wheat, saying: "Verily,

verily I say unto you, Except a corn (kernel) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12 : 24).

Thus the One who alone had a title to live as a man of flesh and blood, laid *that* life down, submitting voluntarily to the power of death, in order that, instead of dwelling forever "alone" (as man) He might bring forth "much fruit." These are His generations, the "many sons" which He brings into glory (Heb. 2 : 10), the "children" of whom He speaks saying, "Behold I, and the children which God hath given Me" (Heb. 2 : 13).

If we keep in mind the fact that the grains of wheat in the ear are all reproductions of the original seed, we shall see how forcibly and beautifully the parable of the "corn of wheat" teaches the lesson of spiritual generation. The life in those who have been quickened together with Christ (Eph. 2 : 5) is truly *His* life reproduced in them by the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and whose law sets us free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8 : 2). We may thus say, "Christ who is our life" (Col. 3 : 4); and as this new life unfolds itself in the being of the believer, and manifests the characteristics of the One who is its source, the former is able also to say "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1 : 21).

Whether, therefore, we are regarding the Written Word or the Incarnate Word, it is true (as has been well said) that "the Word" is the whole matter or substance of what God has revealed; but it is also true that any portion of that matter or substance which enters into a human heart, and which, as a seed, germinates and performs there the stupendous miracle of reproduction, is also the Word, imparting life "after His kind,"—life incorruptible and everlasting as the Word itself.

Thus, in the highest sense of which we can take knowledge, the Word of God is a "Word of Life"—living and reproducing its kind; and thus is being fulfilled the promise to Him who died that we might live, of Whom it was said of old, "He shall see *His seed*, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53 : 10, 11).

The believer too may say with David: "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Ps. 17 : 15). That will be glory for us; but, what is more important, it will be glory also for Him.

XI

THE LIFE-SUSTAINING WORD

The life possessed by human beings is not only a derived life, that is, a life obtained from an external source, but it is a dependent life, requiring continual sustenance. It must be sustained by constant and suitable nutrition, received into the body at short intervals. Man's strength whereof he boasts, and indeed his very existence in the body, are dependent on food, and this food itself must be organic matter, that is to say, matter which has once been living. The fact of this dependence upon food, and upon food which man is utterly unable to make for himself out of inorganic matter, though all the materials are within his reach, should teach him a lesson in humility; but it seems not to have that effect.

We say that man is utterly unable to produce food-stuff though all the materials whereof it is composed are abundantly at hand. This is a pertinent and obvious fact, though one whereof little account is taken. God has imparted to the lowly plant the ministry of supplying food to all the animal creation, and has taught to it, and to it alone, the marvellous secret of converting the minerals of the earth and air—inert, lifeless ele-

ments, utterly incapable of furnishing nourishment to animals or man—into living tissue, endowed with the property of nourishing living creatures higher in the scale of life. "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; that HE MAY BRING FORTH FOOD OUT OF THE EARTH" (Ps. 104: 14).

The humble vegetable organism knows how to extract the nitrogen from the earth, and the carbon from the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and to combine these, in exactly the proper proportions, with the oxygen and hydrogen in water, and with traces of lime and other elements, forming with the aid of heat and light from the sun, living tissue, suitable and necessary for food. This wonderful operation of chemical synthesis is carried on by the modest vegetable so unostentatiously as to attract little notice; and though it has been under the observation of inquisitive and imitative man for thousands of years he has not the faintest notion of how it is done. All the learning and skill of all the chemists in the world, with the resources of all the laboratories in the world, could not produce an ounce of food, though the elements out of which it is made exist everywhere, and in the greatest abundance.

But God, having imparted physical life to His creatures, has also made ample provision for the maintenance of that life, by supplying through

the inscrutable synthesis carried on unceasingly by the vegetable kingdom, abundant food, capable, when taken into the body and properly assimilated, of supplying the waste that is constantly in progress in every part of the body, and of maintaining the strength thereof.

Furthermore, if the conversion of minerals into food-stuff by the members of the vegetable kingdom is a process displaying the marvellous wisdom of God, the process of digestion and nutrition is not less so. Nothing could be more improbable than that food, taken into the body by way of the mouth, should, without any attention or supervision from the tenant of that body, be digested, the valuable parts separated from the worthless, the latter discharged from the body, the former converted into tissue, muscle, bone, sinew, nerve-cell, blood-corpuscle, hair, nails, etc., and distributed automatically throughout the body, each to the place requiring it, and all in due proportion.

In this we have again a process far transcending the comprehension of the most learned men, who must eat and be nourished like other men, and who are equally ignorant of the process whereby their lives are sustained, and whereby they gain the strength to deny God and glorifiy man.

Men boast in these days of their "independence," and make much of "self-reliance." But

this is the height of presumptuous folly; for man is a most helplessly dependent creature, not even able, like the plant, to prepare his own food from the mineral elements, but dependent daily upon living creatures much lower than himself in the scale of being. And so far from having a basis for self-reliance, he does not know how to conduct the simplest of the vital processes of his own body. If his Creator, of Whom principally man loves to fancy himself independent, should turn over to him the operation of the least of those essential processes for the briefest time, the poor creature would miserably perish.

As with the physical life, so is it with the spiritual life of those who have been begotten again of the incorruptible seed of the Word. These spiritual beings require appropriate food; and God has abundantly provided for this need. In studying the important subject of spiritual nutrition we shall learn again the relation between Christ, the Incarnate Word, and the Written Word. Both are spoken of repeatedly as food for the children of God.

The third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the Gospel by John treat of the imparting of eternal life as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to all who believe on Him; and the sixth chapter treats of spiritual nutrition. Therein, after feeding the multitude miraculously, thus showing Himself as the One by whose power

food is multiplied in the earth, He reveals Himself as "the Bread of Life." Twice He says, "I am that bread of life" (verses 35 and 48) and in verse 33, "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." He who gives the life is the One Who also sustains it. Again He says: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (verse 51). And of His words He says, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: *the words* that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (verse 63).

These sayings to the natural mind are, of course, meaningless; but they are addressed to faith. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" is the question which the unbelieving heart asks. How Christ can impart Himself to sustain the "inner man" is a question to which no answer can now be had. The process is incomprehensible to man. But we have seen that the process of physical nutrition is equally beyond human comprehension and contrary to all *a priori* probabilities.

Looking more particularly at what is said in this connection concerning the written or spoken Word of God we find that the Word of God is "living" in the sense that, like other living substance, it has the property of furnishing nutrition, and thereby sustaining life. It is a life-sustaining Word. But here a notable difference at-

tracts our attention. Physical food comes up out of the earth (Ps. 104 : 14), while spiritual food comes down out of heaven (John 6 : 50).

Reference has already been made to the fact that, after setting forth the great truth of spiritual conception and generation through the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, the Apostle Peter enjoins attention to spiritual nutrition. "Wherefore," he says, "as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2 : 1, 2). Evidently His Lord's threefold injunction, "Feed My sheep," "Feed My lambs," had impressed upon him the importance of spiritual nutrition. But proper feeding requires appetite for wholesome food, and so he seeks to excite a desire in young Christians for that whereby they may grow. And he immediately connects the Word with Christ saying, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

The importance of nourishing and sustaining the new life received upon coming to Christ, and the unhappy consequences which always result from neglect of the appropriate diet, have been so often and so forcibly stated by the servants of Christ that it seems hardly necessary to dwell upon this matter. What our subject specially calls for is to note the correspondence between God's way of sustaining man's physical life by food derived from a living source, and His way

of sustaining the believer's spiritual life by food from a living source, that is to say from the living Word.

The passages which present the Word of God as the food for His children are very familiar; and in bringing them to mind again we would impress it upon our readers that these statements are not to be taken as if they were poetical or figurative, but as very literal, practical, and immensely important. In making man it was not God's plan that he should live by bread, or physical food alone, but "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD" (Deut. 8: 3). The manna was given to His people in the wilderness to teach them this lesson, and that they might learn their dependence upon God. Hence this passage was used by the Second Man in His combat with the devil in the wilderness, it being the purpose of the latter to inculcate in man the idea of independence of God. Thus did the Man Jesus Christ, with the Sword of the Spirit, strike sure and true at the central purpose of His great adversary.

It is by *every* word of God that man is to be fed. No part of the Bible can be neglected without loss and detriment; and it will be observed that there is, in the Bible, a variety of spiritual nutriment analogous to the variety of physical food which God has provided for the needs of the physical man. If there be milk for babes, there

is also strong food for those who are mature. And there is the penalty of arrested growth paid by those who remain content with the relatively weak diet suitable for infants, who know, perhaps, only that their sins are forgiven; as the Apostle John says: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you" (1 John 2:12). But those who have to be fed on a milk diet, that is to say, the simplest elementary truths of the Gospel, are unskillful in the word of righteousness. Infants cannot do anything for themselves, much less can they prepare food, or render any other service to others. Hence the Apostle Paul, writing to the Hebrews, upbraids some of them because, at a time when they ought to have been teachers, they had need to be taught again the first principles and were become "such as have need of milk and not of strong food. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong food belongeth to them that are of full age" (Heb. 5:12–14).

Jeremiah says, "Thy words were found and I did eat them" (Jer. 15:16). Thereby he found spiritual strength to sustain him in his most difficult and trying ministry, from which, because of his timid and sensitive disposition, he shrank back in agony of soul. To be a good and effective minister of Christ it is necessary that one be well nourished through partaking largely of the abundant spiritual food which the living

Word supplies. Thus Paul admonished his child in the faith, Timothy, to whom he wrote, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, *nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine*" (1 Tim. 4 : 6).

One practical point with reference to the process of nutrition should be noted. While the living creature cannot comprehend the process, and has no part whatever in supervising it, or carrying it on, and while he is therefore not responsible for the results, the process cannot be carried on unless he takes the food into his being and properly masticates it. Therefore, up to the point of swallowing the food, the living being is responsible, and his volition is exercised. After that the process passes beyond his knowledge and control. Food may be of the best quality, and may be in greatest abundance, but it imparts no nourishment while it remains in the pantry, or on the table.

In like manner the responsibility is with the child of God to partake of the spiritual food so plentifully provided, and to meditate therein day and night (Ps. 1 : 2). Meditation upon what is read is to spiritual nutrition what mastication is to physical nutrition; and it takes time. The result, however, is ample compensation for time

so occupied, for we read of him who observes this simple rule of spiritual dietation that "He shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1 : 3). It means a fruitful life, a vigorous and healthful life, and a prosperous life.

These results are just as sure to follow obedience to the laws of spiritual diet as physical nutrition is to follow attention to the proper reception of material food; and the contrary results are just as sure to follow neglect of those laws in the one case as in the other. The natural mind would be likely to demand an explanation; but faith does not require to know the process, it being sufficient to hear the command. If one refused to partake of his natural food until instructed as to the process of digestion he would starve. In each case the process is inscrutable, but the fact is certain.

XII

THE LIFE-TRANSFORMING WORD

FEEDING upon the Word of God, the bread of life, must necessarily be beneficial to the whole man, including his intellectual and physical being as well as his spiritual.

Much deference is paid in these days to the "powers of the mind." Intellectual prowess is what wins the victories in the fierce commercial struggle of the times. Business men are, of course, keen to take advantage of this condition, as may be seen by the many and costly advertisements of "brain foods"; and many millions of dollars are annually acquired by the shrewd exploiters of these preparations. This, of course, could not be unless there were multitudes who give heed to the assurances that, by the use of the advertised article, it is possible to produce "a new set of brains."

The Bible does not speak of a new set of brains, but it does say to believers, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4 : 23) and "Be not conformed to this world (or age), but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12 : 2). The new man requires a new mind, and provision is made to that end. The

old mind, with all its habits of self-occupation (a sure breeder of unhappiness and discontent), its morbid tendencies, its craving for excitement and sensation, its imaginations, appetites, tastes, inclinations and desires, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, is to be displaced, and a new mind substituted; for godliness has the promise of the vigour of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.

How, then, is this injunction to be carried out? It is of importance to millions of anxious souls to have a clear answer to this question. And it may be had. The every-day incidents and the atmosphere amid which the average man and woman spend their time are such as to produce mental disturbances and disorders to an extent which, if understood, and if anything could impress this thoughtless and excited age, would create wide-spread alarm. It was stated recently that there were twenty-eight thousand inmates of the insane asylums of New York State (a single state of the Union) prior to October, 1907, and that in six months following the industrial convulsion of that month the number of inmates was increased by three thousand. The startling increase in the number of suicides adds its forcible testimony; and the frequency with which one encounters cases of mental depression, insomnia, melancholia, and other nervous disorders, tells of

wide-spread and insidious foes which attack the seat of reason, and which call for methods and means of defense and repair which are beyond the resources of medicine.

The writer knows by experience the indescribable horrors of depressed and morbid mental states, and knows too what a transformation is effected by the "renewing of the mind" according to the Biblical injunction. Full provision is made for this marvellous transformation, and the conditions wherein it is effected are accessible to every believer.

In this case the study of the word used in the command ("be transformed") will make us acquainted with the conditions essential to the transformation. The word in question seems to have been set apart by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of teaching the important and wonderful secret of the transformation of the believer, during his existence in the body, into the likeness of Christ; so that all believers might be able to say with Paul, "We have the mind of Christ."

It will, therefore, surely repay the reader to note carefully the usages of this particular word. Its first occurrence is in the gospel narratives of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ, and is in fact the very word there translated "transfigured" (Matt. 17 : 2; Mark 9 : 2). The word is literally "metamorphosed." "His face did shine as the

sun, and His raiment was white as the light." This may well serve to teach the nature of the change contemplated. It is one that brings the radiance of heaven into the mind and tinges even the commonplace things with a glow of heavenly light.

The next occurrence of the word is, as we have already seen, in Romans 12 : 2, where believers are enjoined to be not cut out on the pattern of this age, but to be metamorphosed or transfigured by the renewing of their minds.

The third and last occurrence of the word tells us plainly *how* this great transformation is brought about. For the Bible is a very practical book. It comes, moreover, from One Who understands perfectly the limitations of man, Who knows and declares that the latter is, in his natural state, "without strength," that is to say, utterly impotent (Rom. 5 : 6). We may be sure, therefore, that when God calls upon the quickened soul to do a thing, He puts the means required for it within his reach. And so, in these plain words we read the conditions requisite for effecting the desired transformation :—"We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, ARE CHANGED into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3 : 18).

The word here translated "are changed" is the same word (metamorphosed or transfigured) used

in the other passages cited; and these are the only occurrences of that word in the Bible.

The teaching is very clear. When the Jews read the Word of God a veil is over their hearts, their minds being blinded (verse 14). Or, as stated in Romans 11 : 25, "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." Hence, they do not behold there Him of whom the Scriptures testify. But, for us who believe, the veil is done away in Christ, and consequently, *all* we beholding are transfigured into the same image by the Divine and irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit.

If, when we look into the Word of God, *we do not see Christ there*, we look to no purpose, for He is everywhere in the Book.

Let it be carefully noted that this transformation is not the work of the man who beholds Christ in the Word; for the process is carried on while the former is not occupied with himself at all, or with his transformation, but is absorbed in the contemplation of the glory of the Lord. The transformation is effected by the power of the Spirit of God; and we may learn from this passage the important lesson that occupation with, and concern about, the work of the Spirit in us can only hinder that work. Let it suffice us that He Who has begun a good work *in us* will perform it until the day of Christ (Phil. 1 : 6). Our part, and it should be also our delight, is to be

continually beholding or contemplating the glory of the Lord; and while so doing we "*are* changed" into the same image, and all the faster if we are unconscious of ourselves.

Let it be also noted that the transformation is a gradual operation, calling for steadfastness in contemplating the Object placed before us by the Holy Spirit. Little by little, as our gaze is fixed upon Him, the old traits and dispositions which are unlike Him are replaced by His own characteristics. Thus the work proceeds "from glory to glory." The conformation to His image, which is God's purpose for all the sons of God (Rom. 8 : 29), is not accomplished, as some would have it, by an instantaneous transfiguration, a convulsive upheaval and displacement of the old nature, brought about by working one's emotions into an ecstatic state; but is accomplished gradually while the believer is continually occupied with Christ ("beholding"). There is no hysterical short-cut to the desired result. For Christ must be known from the Written Word under the tuition of the Holy Spirit; and the process should continue during the whole term of the believer's existence in the body.

Thus the living Word becomes the regulator and transformer of the minds of those who diligently seek it. Under its potent influence confusion of thought, perplexities, depressed mental states, and other hurtful conditions are dissipated,

and the serene tranquillity and repose of the mind of Christ are reproduced in those who are redeemed by His precious blood.

We are passing through the domain of death, the country of the last enemy that is to be destroyed, and who has put all things in this scene under his feet (1 Cor. 15 : 26, 27). On every hand our eyes meet the unmistakable evidences of the supreme sovereignty of death. But in this domain of death there is a Living Word; —a Living Word in a dying world. The forces of corruption and decay cannot fasten upon it, and it laughs at the attacks of its enemies.

But that Word is here, not merely to manifest life, but rather to impart life to those who are perishing, and to bring them into vital contact with the new Life-source of humanity, the Son of God, the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, Who liveth and was dead, and behold He is alive forevermore, and has the keys of death and of Hades (1 Cor. 15 : 47; Rev. 1 : 18). He, as Man, has crossed the gulf between the realm of death and that of life. To that end He became "a partaker of flesh and blood," not to improve flesh and blood, but in order that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through

fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2 : 14, 15). Having Himself crossed that gulf He is the Way of life to all who believe on Him, who, having heard His Word—the Word of life—have likewise passed out of death into life (John 5 : 24).

This is the wonderful provision of God for the deliverance of dying men. In order that they might not die, and because God wills not that any should perish (2 Pet. 3 : 9), He has sent into this dying world a Word of Life. For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matt. 22 : 32).

In comparison with this provision of Divine wisdom, power and grace, from the God who quickeneth the dead (Rom. 4 : 17), how pitifully foolish and vain are all human schemes for the betterment, reform, and cultivation of that old man who has fallen under the sovereignty of death! Men are very ingenious, but none has yet brought forward a scheme for abolishing or escaping death, or for raising the dead. Without that, of what avail are plans of improvement? And what end do they serve but to blind men's minds to the truth that they are dead, and so are beyond all but the power of a God who raises the dead? Surely these schemes are the most successful devices of "the god of this age."

What men need is not morality, but life; not to make death respectable, but to receive the gift

of eternal life; not decent interment but a pathway out of the realm of death. Many men have brought forward their schemes for the "uplift of humanity" (though the results thereof are not yet discernible); but there is only One Man who makes, or ever made, the offer of eternal life. None other has ever said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Me though he were dead yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). He only claims to be the "Fountain of Living Waters" (Jer. 2:13; John 4:14; 7:37), and says to all who are suffering the thirst of death, "Come unto Me and drink" (John 7:37).

Therefore, in concluding these reflections upon the Living Word, we obey the command, "Let him that heareth say Come," and would lovingly repeat the last invitation of grace recorded in that Word of life:

LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME.
AND WHOSOEVER WILL,
LET HIM TAKE
THE WATER OF LIFE
FREELY.

(Rev. 22. 17.)